

Announces Funding for Two Local Green Energy Projects

October 8, 2009

Washington, D.C. – During a news conference call today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) urged greater and timelier green energy investments, while using two projects for which he has worked to secure funding as examples of initiatives we must pursue. The Congressman announced the inclusion of West Chester University's geothermal installation and Lower Providence Township's (Montgomery County) major solar panel plan in the House-passed Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Maintaining efforts such as these are critical to protecting our environment, decreasing our dependence on foreign oil, and creating jobs for a 21st century, globally-competitive economy. The Congressman introduced two pieces of legislation to more effectively ensure advancements in our green industries. Having helped pass the green energy reform bill in the House, he also emphasized the urgent need for Senators to follow that leadership and pass legislation that addresses climate change and increases job opportunities.

"Now is the time when Pennsylvania and the rest of America should be retooling our economy to increase efficiency and produce more domestic clean energy," said Congressman Sestak. "The Economic Stimulus bill stopped our economic slide. The climate change bill will move our country forward with new energy and new jobs for the next generation. The projects we are highlighting today are great examples of what we can achieve more of once the Senate acts on the pending legislation."

The Congressman also proposed to build on his efforts to pass the American Clean Energy and Security Act through two pieces of legislation. One submission extends the grant in lieu of tax credit provisions in Economic Stimulus bill until 2013 (they currently expire in 2010). This provision gives those looking to invest in renewable energy further flexibility by extending the option of selecting a grant instead of taking a tax credit. This recognizes the fact that some, especially in these tough economic times, do not have enough tax liability to benefit from a tax credit.

A second piece of legislation will increase the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for Geothermal to bring it in line with the credit given to solar and wind energy. Currently geothermal investments only receive a 10 percent tax credit, while solar and wind projects receive a 30 percent credit. This legislation recognizes the potential positive impact geothermal has on job creation and in providing a steady heating, cooling, and power generation source. Today, geothermal accounts for only two percent of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning market. Increasing that market to 30 percent could reduce our dependence on foreign oil by 15 percent.

"We need to do more to invest in renewable energy," said Congressman Sestak. "As found by the Environmental Law Institute, less than 30% of federal energies subsidies go to renewable efforts – with half of that going to ethanol – while the rest goes to fossil fuel production. We must, if we are to compete globally, reverse those percentages and spur unprecedented growth through sustainable energy development."

Congressman Sestak worked to secure \$300,000 for West Chester University to transform the campus' heating and cooling systems from traditional power sources to geothermal. This change will significantly decrease the institution's carbon footprint and serve as a national model for green campus efforts. The institution, led by Vice President for Advancement Mark Pavlovich and project director Greg Cuprak, are in the process of designing and implementing this project by building well fields and installing connecting piping to provide the geothermal heat/cooling source for campus buildings.

To further solar power efforts in the region, the Congressman also included in the same bill and helped pass \$200,000 for Lower Providence Township and PECO Energy to assess the viability of constructing a "brightfield" solar farm. With a proposed location on the former Moyer's Landfill, declared a superfund site in 1998, the project represents an ideal partnership between a municipality and utility company, while creating environmental benefit from grounds used for waste disposal. The Congressman applauded Township Manager Joe Dunbar for his efforts to move the effort forward.

"Pennsylvania is positioned to be a leader in green energy manufacturing," said Congressman Sestak. "In my District, clean energy companies like Conergy and Iberdrola have already created hundreds of new jobs. If passed, the climate change bill will be an engine for driving job growth and American innovation, creating about 1.7 million more jobs -- 71,500 here in

Pennsylvania. With more investments similar to those in West Chester and Lower Providence, America's green energy future will be stamped 'Made in Pennsylvania.'"